



U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

<u>Categorical Exclusion Number:</u>	CX-270908
<u>Loan Application Number:</u>	EIR0037
<u>Proposed Action Title:</u>	American Electric Power’s (AEP) Columbus Grove to Ottawa Transmission Line Project
<u>Program of Field Office:</u>	Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF)
<u>Location(s) (City/County/State):</u>	Putnam County, Ohio

Proposed Action Description:

Description of Categorically Excluded Action

The United States Department of Energy (DOE), Office of Energy Dominance Financing (EDF) may provide loan guarantees for energy infrastructure projects under section 1706 of Title XVII of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, as amended by the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 (42 U.S.C. 16517) and the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Pub. L. No. 119-21, 139 Stat. 72 (July 4, 2025)) (the Energy Dominance Financing or EDF Program). The EDF Program provides loan guarantees for projects that either (1) retool, repower, repurpose or replace energy infrastructure that has ceased operations; (2) enable operating energy infrastructure to increase capacity or output; or (3) support or enable the provision of known or forecastable electric supply at time intervals necessary to maintain or enhance grid reliability or other system adequacy needs (42 U.S.C. 16517(a)(2) and Pub. L. No. 119-21, 139 Stat. 72 (July 4, 2025)).

The EDF is considering whether to issue a loan guarantee of a funding facility to American Electric Power (AEP, or the Applicant) pursuant to its authority under the EDF Program. In its application, AEP has identified the Columbus Grove to Ottawa Transmission Line Project (the Project) for inclusion in the funding facility that is the subject of EDF’s loan guarantee (the Proposed Action). AEP may request inclusion of multiple individual projects with independent utility in the funding facility that is the subject of the EDF loan guarantee; accordingly, EDF will complete environmental reviews pursuant to applicable and relevant environmental statutes for these projects prior to their inclusion in the funding facility that is the subject of EDF’s loan guarantee.

Project Description

The Project would replace transmission line Structures #153 and #154 along an approximately 0.04 mile-long (approximately 250 foot-long) section of the existing Columbus Grove-Ottawa 69kV transmission line in Putnam County, Ohio. These transmission line structures are located near AEP’s existing Columbus Grove Station that is located in the northern part of the Village of Columbus Grove. The Project is in a highly developed area with generally flat topography spanning maintained lawns adjacent to State Route 65. The Project footprint consists of the Columbus Grove Station, paved parking lots, and landscaped areas (i.e., mowed lawn). There is no natural or undisturbed vegetation or habitat in or around the Project. The broader surrounding area is comprised of various types of development including industrial, business, residential, and transportation.

The two existing transmission structures, 75-foot-tall wood poles, will be removed from the existing right-of-way (ROW) and replaced with new structures, 75-foot-tall steel poles, and conductors. The ROW width is approximately 50 feet. Timber mat access roads and work pads will be placed along the ROW for use during construction. Approximately 0.53 acres outside of the existing ROW will be used for temporary access, work pads, and pull pads; all areas will be in mowed and maintained lawn. No wetlands, surface waters, or floodplains occur within or adjacent to the Project footprint. The Project is not within any federal, state, or local public lands. Construction activities consistent with transmission lines typically include erosion and sediment control, temporary access roads, crane pad grading, foundation installation, structure assembly and erection, conductor and shield wire installation, and restoration once construction is completed. Construction is anticipated to start in May 2026.



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EDF’s review of the Project in accordance with the Endangered Species Act determined that the Project would have *no effect* on the Indiana bat (endangered), whooping crane (experimental, non-essential population), and monarch butterfly (proposed threatened) due to the lack of habitat for these species in and around the Project.

In accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, EDF consulted with the Ohio State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO). The Ohio SHPO concurred with EDF’s Finding of No Historic Properties Affected for this Project on February 26, 2026. EDF identified and contacted nine (9) federally recognized Native American Indian Tribes (Tribes) that may have an interest in the Project area: Eastern Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma; Hannahville Indian Community, Michigan; Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians, Michigan; Match-e-be-nash-she-wish Band of Pottawatomis Indians of Michigan; Miami Tribe of Oklahoma; Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma; Seneca-Cayuga Nation; Shawnee Tribe; and Wyandotte Nation. The Shawnee Tribe responded and stated they have no concern with the Project. No other tribes provided comment on the Project. In the event of a post-review unanticipated discovery of cultural resources and/or human remains during construction, EDF will determine actions to resolve adverse effects and notify the SHPO, any Tribe that might attach religious and cultural significance to the affected property, and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) within 48 hours of the discovery, pursuant to 36 CFR 800.13(b)(3).

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B4.13 - Upgrading and rebuilding existing powerlines

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Choose an item.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Description:

B4.13 Upgrading and Rebuilding Existing Powerlines: Upgrading or rebuilding existing electric powerlines, which may involve relocations of small segments of the powerlines within an existing powerline right-of-way or within otherwise previously disturbed or developed lands (as discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(1)). Upgrading or rebuilding existing electric powerlines also may involve widening an existing powerline right-of-way to meet current electrical standards if the widening remains within previously disturbed or developed lands and only extends into a small area beyond such as lands as needed to comply with applicable electrical standards. Covered actions would be in accordance with applicable requirements, including the integral elements listed at the start of appendix B of this part; and would incorporate appropriate design and construction standards, control technologies, and best management practices. This exclusion does not apply to underwater powerlines. As used in this categorical exclusion, “small” has the meaning discussed at 10 CFR 1021.410(g)(2).

For the DOE procedures regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see [10 CFR 1021.102](#) and Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, and also Section 5.4 (Applying one or more categorical exclusions to a proposal) and Appendices B and C of [DOE's National Environmental Policy Act Implementing Procedures](#) (June 30, 2025).

Requirements and guidance in 10 CFR 1021.102 and DOE’s NEPA Implementing Procedures: (See full text in regulation and in Implementing Procedures)

- The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021 or Appendix B and C of DOE’s NEPA Implementing Procedures (June 30, 2025).

To fit within the classes of actions listed in Appendix B to 10 CFR Part 1021, or Appendix B of DOE’s NEPA Implementing Procedures, a proposal must satisfy the conditions that are integral elements of the classes of actions in Appendix B of both 10 CFR Part 1021 and DOE’s NEPA Implementing Procedures.



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There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal. DOE or an applicant may modify the proposal to avoid reasonably foreseeable adverse significant effects such that the categorical exclusion would apply.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion.

[Note: For proposals that fit within the categorical exclusions listed in Appendix C of DOE's NEPA Implementing Procedures, see DOE's notice of adoption for the subject Appendix C categorical exclusion for additional considerations. DOE notices of adoption for other agency categorical exclusions may be found on [DOE's Section 109 webpage](#).]

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer, I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other requirements and guidance set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

Corporate Validation:

Name and Title (Print): Christopher Long
Director, Environmental

Signature: *Christopher Long*

Date: March 3, 2026

NEPA Compliance Officer:

Name and Title (Print): Todd Stribley
Director, Environmental Programs

Signature:

Date: March 3, 2026